



Appropriations Committee

Public Hearing

Thursday, February 23, 2023

HB6659 AAC The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2025, And Making Appropriations Therefor

(Elementary & Secondary Education Agencies)

Support for Early Care Education-Care4Kids Funding

My name is Jim Williams, and I am the Government Relations Director for the American Heart Association in CT. The American Heart Association (AHA) is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. Our mission is to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives, and we take our mission very seriously here in CT. I would like to thank the leadership and members of the Appropriations Committee for providing me with the opportunity to provide brief comment in support of HB 6659, particularly the proposed funding for early care education program Care4Kids.

We applaud the Governor's proposal to assist Care4Kids with additional funding for FY 24/25. In the first few years of life, a child's brain develops rapidly, building an important foundation for future learning, behavior, and health.¹ Early childhood is a time when skills, knowledge, and habits are developed.² Many children spend a significant part of their day in early care and education (ECE) programs, making these settings ideal for building habits that help children grow up healthy.^{3&4}

Early childhood education pays dividends. Research by James Heckman reported that high-quality birth-to-five programs for disadvantaged children can deliver a 13 percent per year return on investment. Significant gains are realized through better outcomes in education, health, social behaviors, and employment.⁵ Additionally, according to a report from The Pew Center, participation in high-quality pre-K improves a child's chances of academic success.⁶

For these reasons we wholeheartedly support the Governor's proposed funding of early childhood education via the Care4Kids program, and hope that you will support this important funding as well.

Respectfully submitted,

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SOURCES

¹Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. From Best Practices to Breakthrough Impacts: A ScienceBased Approach to Building a More Promising Future for Young Children and Families. May 2016. http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/From_Best_Practices_to_Breakthrough_Impacts-4.pdf.

²Nemours Children's Health System. State Quality Rating and Improvement Systems: Strategies to Support Achievement of Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Practices in Early Care and Education Settings. June 2016. https://d3knp61p33sjvn.cloudfront.net/2016/07/State_QRIS_Strategies_to_Support_Achievement_of_Healthy_Eating_and_Physical_Activity_Practice_in_ECE_Settings-June2016.pdf.

³Nemours Children's Health System. State Quality Rating and Improvement Systems: Strategies to Support Achievement of Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Practices in Early Care and Education Settings. June 2016.

⁴https://d3knp61p33sjvn.cloudfront.net/2016/07/State_QRIS_Strategies_to_Support_Achievement_of_Healthy_Eating_and_Physical_Activity_Practice_in_ECE_Settings-June2016.pdf. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families. National Survey of Early Care and Education Fact Sheet: Characteristics of Center-based Early Care and Education Programs. OPRE Report No. 2014-73b. November 2014. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/characteristics_of_cb_fact_sheet_final_111014.pdf.

⁵Heckman JJ; The Heckman Equation Project. Research Summary: The Lifecycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program. 2016. https://heckmanequation.org/assets/2017/01/F_Heckman_CBAOnePager_120516.pdf.

⁶The Pew Center on the States. Transforming Public Education: Pathway to a Pre-K-12 Future. September 2011. http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pes_assets/2011/pewprektransformingpubliceducationpdf.pdf.